

A Walk to Remember: Creating A Historic Walking Tour A Save Our History “How To” Project Guide

The Tsongas Industrial History Center and the Lowell National Historic Park partnered with 165 8th grade students at The Bartlett Middle School. Students documented and mapped important historic sites, industrial and otherwise, that served to define the rich history of the community. Using the Boston Freedom Trail as inspiration, students worked with staff members to create the “Lowell Heritage Trail Activity Book,” a resource now available to all Lowell Public School 8th graders and community members who visit the park. The book includes photographs, visuals, and narrative text contributed by students, a map with numbered historic sites, and activities and questions focusing on the history of the neighborhood designed for 8th grade level students.

Project Description:

Students will create a “Heritage Trail” of historic sites in their community and a corresponding guidebook including maps, photographs, and historical research.

Goal:

Students will discover, study, and encourage tourism at the historic sites that exist in their local community.

Time Required:

5-10 meetings (of about two hours each) with students either in school or after school, depending upon the number of historic sites selected.



Students preparing for “A Walk to Remember”.

Materials Needed:

Digital cameras (one per group of 3 or 4 students), equipment for uploading pictures (a flash drive is useful); computers; tri-fold poster boards, various art supplies (markers, construction paper, stencils, e.g.); a long strip of paper; transportation if sites are not within walking distance of school.

Project Guidelines:

1. **Brainstorm!**
Develop a list of historic sites in the neighborhood. Decide which sites to include on the trail. Work as a class, in groups, or have students ask their family, friends, and neighbors for ideas.
2. **Schedule visits.**
Make appointments with appropriate contacts to visit each site (first and last sites to be visited by all students, other sites visited by small groups).
3. **Prepare.**
Make a list of questions you have and information you need about this site.
4. **At the site.**
Interview the site expert. Someone in the group should take notes. Feel free to ask the speaker to slow down or repeat information.
5. **Take pictures.**
Photograph the site both outside and inside (if possible). Record the photographer’s name. Write notes about each photo and record names of any people in the photo.
6. **Research.**
Use the library, local archives, and the Internet to find more information about sites. Work with a history expert to make sure historical information is accurate.

7. **Map it!**

Make a map of the neighborhood that indicates where the trail goes. Name and number the sites. Use an existing map for guidance if one already exists.

8. **Be a historian.**

Write a one-page summary of the history and significance of each site.

9. **Design, layout, edit, proofread.**

Place text, photos, maps, and clip art in appropriate spots, then proofread the entire guide.

10. **Make historical connections.**

Use various reference sources to identify important local, national, and international events from the same time periods as your sites. Write these events in chronological order on a long strip of paper in timeline form, adding in important dates related to your sites.

11. **Share your work with the community.**

Use tri-fold poster boards to exhibit information about each site. Each display should include the site name in big letters, a few pictures of each site, and some explanatory text (one per site). Set all the boards up at a school or community event.

The Tsongas Center is a partnership between the University of Massachusetts Lowell Graduate School of Education and Lowell National Historical Park. Students can learn about the American Industrial Revolution at the Tsongas Center by experiencing history where it happened. The center also serves as a curriculum resource for teachers to participate in practical professional development workshops and great primary-source-based teaching activities.

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Helpful Tips:

1. Network to line up professional and volunteer collaborators in the community.
2. Give students as much decision-making power as possible.
3. Assign two students the job of Project Historians. These students will capture the highlights of each working session through journal entries and photos of students in action.
4. Look for intersections with students' school building's history. What was happening in the region and in the world the year the school was built?



"Round House", one of the sites on their trail.